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FOREIGN NEWS ON APPLES

EUROPEAN DEMAND FOR APPLES DURING 1925

European demand for American apples during the fall and early winter months of each year, is governed to a great extent by the production of European orchards. Though these apples may be of poor quality, they flow upon the markets, sell for low prices and limit the quantity of outside fruit that will be absorbed, regardless of its higher quality. This situation makes the crop in England especially important to the exporter who is forecasting early demands abroad, because English markets absorb the largest share of our exports and her orchards are on as high a standard as any in Europe. Next come the Continental orchards that export to England, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Lastly, consideration should be given to the domestic orchards in Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Mid-summer prospects are that England will have a comparatively light crop of fruit, yet a slightly better crop than she has produced in either of the last two years. Ample rains during July came in time to save the crop which had been endangered by a long period of drought. Certain parts of the island are very short of apples, but in Kent, where the best orchards are situated and where production is most important in flooding the cities in the South of England and the Midlands, a fairly good crop is on the trees. Enough rains came in May to carry the crop along with fair size, regardless of the very dry summer that has followed. Some dropping has been apparent. The quality of the fruit is expected to be good, as there has been less rain and more warm days in England this summer than for many years back. Since comparisons are being made with the crops of 1923 and 1924, however, it must be remembered that those crops, both from the standpoint of quantity and of quality were the poorest that England has known in recent history. Though it is expected that the present crop will exceed that of either of those years, it still remains a comparatively light crop of fruit. The pear crop is also light.

The European orchard regions exporting to England, Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden are situated in Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Italy. Of these countries, the last three are the most important. Midsummer prospects are that Switzerland will not have over 75 per cent of a crop. In the Italian Tyrol, which puts out the fanciest pack in Europe, the crop is said to be not more than one-tenth of last year's crop. Very few of the flashy Kalterer-Bochmer variety from Bolzano will be seen on the markets of Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden or in England during the coming fall and winter. Pears in this district are also very light.

In the western part of Italy, fruit from which moves mostly to France, a normal crop is expected. This production has little effect on the Northern markets.

The Elbe Valley district of Czechoslovakia, a district which loads its apples in bulk into 100 ton barges and floats them down the river to Berlin and Hamburg, deluging German markets in seasons of bumper crops, is very light on apples this year. Pears in this district are almost a complete failure. Other parts of Bohemia report a medium crop of apples. The Dutch crop is below average.

Thus it is apparent that the exports from the continent of Europe, which are to the markets of Northern Germany and the Scandinavian countries what the English grown supplies are to the English markets, are going to be almost negligible this year. The apple crop in Germany is of medium size but of poor quality. In Denmark the home crop is expected to be much smaller than last year. In Sweden the apple crop is spotted. According to Consul General Claude I. Dawson of Stockholm, the crop is reported above the average in the section around Lake Malaren, while Consul Walter H. Sholes of Goteborg advises that in the southern and western sections the crop will be below that of 1924. The trade expects greater demands, providing prices are not too high.

English Market Prospects Affected by Industrial Conditions.

When considering the buying power of Great Britain, attention is called to the great amount of unemployment at this time. There are now over 1,300,000 out of work, and conditions are such as to indicate that there will continue to be a large number of unemployed. No rapid improvement seems likely to occur in the near future, although the threatened coal strike has been at least temporarily settled. The chief centers of unemployment are in the coal, steel and ship-building districts in the North of England and in Scotland, both good markets for American apples. Coal contracts have been continually lost to Continental mines in recent months. The textile industry remains more or less dull. The one bright industrial spot in England is centered about the motor industry in Birmingham and Coventry.

It is most difficult to gauge the English market in advance, because even with these conditions existing the Australian and New Zealand apple deal has gone through in fine shape with higher prices than usual. It is well to note that all strikes are not necessarily a condition to cause alarm, unless the railroads are tied up. The last coal strike had a tremendous stimulative effect on the demand for uncooked foods and resulted in increased consumption of apples with prices ruling high.

Brighter Prospects on the Continent.

Markets in Germany, Denmark, Norway and Sweden will not be deluged with apples from Czechoslovakia, the Italian Tyrol and home orchards as they were during the fall of 1924. Consequently demand for American apples in Dutch, German and Scandinavian ports will set in earlier than last year. Conditions in Denmark are not quite so favorable from a demand standpoint as with our other regular apple customers on the Continent, according to Wm. A. Schoenfeld, United States Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. The buying power of Germany, Norway and Sweden, however, judging from labor employment, exports and imports and retail buying, should be up to what it was a year ago, if not slightly better, although there are grounds for uncertainty as to whether these conditions will be sustained during the autumn and winter.

Another factor related to the demand for apples in Continental markets as well as in England is the universal failure of the pear crop all over Central and Northern Europe, while France reports a short crop. Pears occupy a more important place in most European retail markets than they do in America so that this factor will unquestionably have a bearing on apple demands. It seems fairly certain that the early exports to Continental markets will not meet with the disaster that was experienced in October and November of 1924, providing operators hold consignments to reasonable figures for each of the markets.

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